

Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana

Education Task Force Meeting

Tuesday, July 8, 2014

10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Indiana Government Center South, Room 22

Present: Melissa Ambre, J.T. Coopman, Cathy Danyluk, Laurie Elliott, Nancy Gettinger, Reba James, Rebecca Kubacki, Robert Marra, Marg Mast, Marilyn Moores, Lenae Reedus, Anita Silverman, Susan Lockwood

Absent: Kate Coffman, Susan Lightfoot, Kaarin Lueck, Gail Riecken

After introductions, Susan Lockwood provided the Task Force with a brief background of the Commission and background of how the Education Task Force was established. Rebecca Kubacki provided additional background, remarking that it was important for agencies to work together to address common issues surrounding children and their families.

Laurie Elliott, of the Indiana Youth Law T.E.A.M., Kellie Whitcomb, of IDOC, and Susan Lockwood provided the Task Force members with a presentation about education for youth in secure settings (juvenile corrections and juvenile detention).

There was a discussion of the need to remember youth in residential treatment programs in addition to youth in secure settings.

Susan Lockwood led a discussion of the Joint Letter from the US Department of Education and the US Department of Justice, issued June 9, regarding their objectives for the provision of education and transition services to court-involved youth. She pointed out the five objectives at the end of the letter, and how they aligned with objectives that she had written as a result of the issues raised at the February 19, 2014 meeting of the Commission. She asked for questions or comments specific to the Federal Objectives and the Education Task Force Objectives, stating that it would be important for the two to be aligned in case there were any federal grant solicitations available.

Nancy Gettinger stated that we need to include parents and emphasize parent involvement.

Marilyn Moores stated that we need to address the existing statute that requires judges to report to schools when a student has committed a crime that would be considered a felony if he were an adult. She states that this gives schools the excuse to expel students from school.

Cathy Danyluk reminded the group to include the youth incarcerated as adults at Wabash Valley Correctional Facility and Indiana Women's Prison. At this time, these youth do not have access to curricula leading to a high school diploma. They are enrolled in courses that lead to high school equivalency exams through a traditional Adult Basic Education program.

Nancy Gettinger remarked that students in foster care are very transient and change schools often, which is problematic. There are issues of truancy at a young age because parents do not get young children to school.

J.T. Coopman asked if the federal government was going to provide additional funding for states to meet the objectives, and if so, how would it be administered? Through Title I funds? Susan Lockwood stated there had been more competitive grant solicitations from US Department of Education and US Department of Justice that were specific to juveniles. J.T. Coopman pointed out that competitive grants were not the same as actual funding.

Anita Silverman stated some school corporations serving detention centers assigned their “displaced” teachers to the students in detention as a way to encourage them to retire or resign. She also believes that teachers working with these youth need to have training specific to Crisis Intervention or Trauma-Informed Care. Susan Lockwood added that IDOC teachers are trained in Motivational Interviewing.

Lenee Reedus suggested that we investigate how other states are responding to the Joint Statement from DOE-DOJ and work with them to get ideas for addressing the objectives.

Cathy Danyluk informed the group that IDOE and IDOC were in the process of drafting a response to the Joint Statement and would be distributing it to school superintendents. They will include J.T. Coopman on this project to raise awareness among the public school administrators.

Anita Silverman requested that we work on ways to share information among IDOC-IDOE-DCS . Cathy Danyluk brought up the issue of following FERPA regulations. Rebecca Kubacki reminded the Task Force that the Commission has a Data Sharing Task Force and we can offer this request to them.

Cathy Danyluk described situations where students misunderstood their status with public schools, thinking they were “expelled for life”, and how she has had to advocate for them to be re-enrolled. The education liaisons at DCS are additional supports for students and parents to access through the transition process.

Susan Lockwood pointed out the need for a representative from Department of Workforce Development (DWD) on the Task Force since DWD oversees the JAG (Jobs for America’s Graduates) program for at-risk youth. She will contact Leslie Crist at DWD to make this addition.

Anita Silverman pointed out the need for attention to English Language Learners, as outlined in the federal objectives.

ORGANIZING THE WORK

Susan Lockwood proposed the Task Force meet every other month, and focus on one or two objectives at each meeting. Rebecca Kubacki recommended the inclusion of the legislative Ways and Means Chair and the Education Chair at the September meeting since the upcoming Legislative Session includes the approval of a new budget.

Susan Lockwood will include Dr. Jeff Pittman, VP of the Corporate College at Ivy Tech, on the November agenda. Dr. Pittman is interested in supporting at-risk youth at the post-secondary level.

After discussion, Susan Lockwood proposed the following meeting dates and schedule:

Friday, September 5, 2014 (Funding)

Friday, November 7, 2014 (Transition and Reentry/Access to Technology)

Friday, January 9, 2014 (Access to relevant and meaningful programming/Recruitment, employment,
and retention of qualified staff)

Friday, March 6, 2014 Review

Friday, May 8, 2014 Recommendations for Commission

Susan Lockwood stated that she would follow-up with the task force members regarding their interest in working on specific objectives, along with a subsequent summary of assignments.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:59 a.m.